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Office of Transition Initiatives

UGANDA



OTI MISSION STATEMENT

To support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs.

FAST FACTS

Start Date: June 2008
Budget: \$3.36 million (FY11)
\$27.9 million (to date)

USAID/OTI

<http://www.usaid.gov>

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) launched the Northern Uganda Transition Initiative in June 2008. The program supports the voluntary return of internally displaced Ugandans to their homes by increasing their confidence in the ability of the Government of Uganda (GOU) to deliver strategic services and strive for their welfare. To assist these efforts, OTI focuses on three objectives: (1) increasing access to information on peace, recovery, and development programs through media and strategic communications; (2) increasing the visibility of, and confidence in, the GOU through the delivery of strategic interventions; and (3) supporting truth and reconciliation initiatives.

ACTIVITIES

The OTI program is primarily based in the Acholi region of northern Uganda. Program activities revolve around the following objectives:

Increasing Access to Information on Peace, Recovery and Development –

OTI works directly with radio stations to help disseminate correct and timely information on issues such as public services and land rights to returnees in northern Uganda. OTI also supports creative and strategic communications that convey messages of peace, recovery, and development. For example, OTI distributed information on the 2011 national and local elections and has worked on a media campaign to bridge the Ugandan “north-south divide” and create a greater understanding about developments in the north.

Support to Government Infrastructure Renovations – OTI works through local government technical offices to renovate schools, health clinics, and sub-county government offices in the Acholi sub-region. Projects raise the visibility of the government while increasing citizens' awareness of, and confidence in, their local officials. Government officials and citizens consider these types of infrastructure projects their highest priorities, especially in areas where internally displaced people are returning. These rehabilitation projects are winding down as larger donors initiate activities in this sector.

Support for Reconciliation – OTI's activities supporting traditional and cultural reconciliation processes have concluded. These activities helped communities heal from the wounds of war, reinvigorated culture, and allowed displaced Ugandans to return home. Recent activities under this component have focused on youth, local government capacity building, and conflict prevention as the country prepared for national and local elections.

COUNTRY SITUATION

Big Electoral Wins for the NRM – Ugandans went to the polls over the course three weeks during the quarter to cast ballots for a number of offices. Presidential and parliamentary elections were held on February 18, and elections for district chairs, council members, and mayors were held on February 23 and March 7. Incumbent President Yoweri Museveni secured more than 68 percent of the vote and the ruling National Resistance Movement (NRM) increased its majority in Parliament. Four opposition presidential candidates rejected the results and called for peaceful protests. The police reacted immediately and the small protests were met with tear gas.

The ruling NRM party did exceptionally well in northern Uganda, surprising many observers. President Museveni won 57 percent of the vote in the region, and the NRM took the majority of votes in most of the northern districts and sub-counties. Some observers said vote rigging was responsible for the result, while others maintained the poll reflected citizen approval of the party's work to sustain the peace in the region.

Local and national elections concluded with both ruling party and opposition candidates alleging vote rigging and other election irregularities. During the presidential poll, international election observers expressed concerns that the political playing field was not level and that the inequities provided insurmountable advantages to the incumbent, as significant amounts of government resources were legally used to support Museveni's campaign. Observers also criticized New Vision and the Uganda Broadcasting Corporation, the country's state-owned and government-leaning media outlets, for unbalanced campaign coverage and for favoring the president.

High Prices, Weak Schilling, Hard Living – The Uganda shilling has depreciated nearly 50 percent over the past two years and further depreciation, coupled with rapid inflation, is expected as Uganda struggles to finance its spiraling budget through the end of the fiscal year, which runs through June. Depreciation is attributed to high dollar demand amid low supply and high state expenditures. Among recent state expenditures is the transfer of more than \$700 million to an alleged arms dealer as partial payment for six fighter jets. The transfer was made without the knowledge or notification of Parliament. Prolonged drought and food shortages have exacerbated inflationary pressures and increased the prices citizens pay for staples.

Regional Security – Uncertainty about security and stability across the region has increased. Mere weeks after the peaceful referendum vote in South Sudan, clashes leading to the death of hundreds of people broke out between ethnic groups. Uganda and Burundi have agreed to provide additional troops to AMISOM, the Africa Union peacekeeping mission in Somalia. Casualties among peacekeepers have increased over recent months, as AMISOM and Somali forces backing the Transitional Federal Government launched an offensive to gain full control over Mogadishu. In addition, with the overthrow of dictatorial regimes and anti-government protests in the Middle East and North Africa, observers and various political actors are wondering whether similar revolts could gain traction in Uganda. An increased police presence on the streets of Uganda is evident.

Update on the PRDP – The GOU's effort to increase development in northern Uganda is nearing its second anniversary. The Peace, Recovery and Development Plan (PRDP) is funded by the government and international donors, and while the effort has proven a success in many respects, the PRDP technical working group has identified a number of challenges that continue to affect plan implementation. These challenges include the following:

- contractor inexperience – lack of capacity can result in shoddy work;
- overextended contractors – capable organizations are overwhelmed by demand;
- increasing costs of supplies and/or poor quality materials;
- few PRDP resources available for quality control and monitoring and evaluation activities;
- staff shortages – particularly at the district level;
- weak ownership culture (e.g., commitment to proper maintenance) in rural areas;
- lack of citizen awareness of PRDP activities in the north; and
- competition for resources between “old” districts and newly created districts following NRM strategy that has carved new jurisdictions from existing districts.

UPCOMING EVENTS

May 2011 - OTI Northern Uganda Program closeout

GRANTS SUMMARY

To date, OTI, through its implementing partner Casals & Associates, has cleared 280 activities worth approximately \$15 million, of which more than \$14 million has been disbursed. During the quarter, the program cleared eight grants totaling \$227,317. OTI cleared the final grants under this program the week of February 15, 2011. The table below details grant funding by sector for the quarter and since program inception.

Sector	Grants Cleared Jan - Mar 2011	Budget for Grants Jan - Mar 2011	Grants Cleared Since June 2008	Budget for Grants Since June 2008
Agriculture			5	\$111,451
Civic Education			14	\$740,242
Conflict Mitigation			4	\$222,872
Economic Development			3	\$62,009
Education			42	\$1,968,636
Health			10	\$585,599
Infrastructure	3	\$64,369	62	\$5,418,557
Institution Strengthening	1	\$48,387	57	\$1,807,210
Media	4	\$114,561	45	\$1,657,867
Reconciliation			31	\$1,354,775
Water/Sanitation			7	\$277,680
Total	8	\$227,317	280	\$14,206,898

HIGHLIGHTS

Community Justice Centers Complete – In 2009, the U.S. Department of Defense provided OTI with 1207 funding to establish community justice centers in northern Uganda, and all grant activities associated with the funding were completed this quarter. The 1207 grants supported the Ugandan Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs' Justice, Law and Order Sector with the creation of three centers that will enhance the ability of the courts, prosecutors, and the police to work together as they seek to increase access to justice in the region. The first community justice center was inaugurated in Pader/Agogo in January; the second and third centers were inaugurated in Otuke and Kiryandongo in March. Many dignitaries, including the Chief Justice of Uganda, Benjamin Odoki; USAID/Uganda Deputy Director John Mark; Jeanne Briggs, USAID/Gulu; and local officials attended the ceremonies.

Residents are calling the Lira Court House (Pader/Agogo) "the heart of Lira District," not only because of its prominence in the town but also for the role it will play in enhancing justice and reconciliation in the district. The centers in Otuke and Kiryandongo are more comprehensive, as they comprise a court house, a police station, as well as police and magistrate housing. Chief Justice Odoki said that the centers "will help demystify the justice system and strengthen citizen confidence in the judicial process. Case backlogs and delayed justice will now be an issue of the past."



OTI constructed the Lira Court House with 1207 funding. Courts and law enforcement offices are co-locating in community justice centers to improve access to the legal system in northern Uganda.

Inauguration of the Kitgum War Memorial and Archive – As part of its support for northern Uganda's transition from war to peace and stability, OTI worked with Makerere University's Refugee Law Project (RLP), local officials, and traditional leaders to establish a comprehensive war archive and library. The archive will house a collection of artifacts, videos, studies, pictures, and other materials documenting the country's fight against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and serve as a center for academic research on the conflict. Commissioning the center on April 6, Professor Joseph Kakooza, chairman of the Uganda Law Commission, said the memorial will remind citizens to be vigilant with efforts to ensure that the country avoids similar conflicts in the future. Also speaking at the event, Kenneth Oketta, the prime minister of Acholi Ker Kwaro, an Acholi cultural institution, said the center

will preserve aspects of the Acholi tradition and help in the transition and resettlement process. Bishop Macleod Baker Ochola II, retired, Kitgum Diocese, described the center as an “inspirational vision” that would benefit the world.

OTI provided seed funding for the first phase of the initiative to renovate the library facilities. RLP then leveraged more than \$300,000 for the second phase, allowing it to complete renovations as well as an outdoor display center for exhibits. The project received academic and IT support from the United Nations, the U.K. Department for International Development, universities in Belgium and the Netherlands, and Tufts University. The Kitgum District local government and RLP have signed a memorandum of understanding, as the group will manage the center for the next few years.



Traditional dancers perform at the Kitgum War Memorial and Archive inauguration ceremony.

PROGRAM APPRAISAL

The OTI program continues to have a significant impact in northern Uganda and program effects are extremely visible to local residents. Critical information on peace, recovery, and development has been disseminated through program efforts, and activities—such as the rehabilitation of public buildings and schools in areas where displaced Ugandans have returned—have addressed local government priorities down to the sub-county level. These projects have provided citizens with visible signs that peace is taking hold and that the public sector is responding to community needs. Finally, OTI has facilitated small reconciliation projects at the village level in all targeted districts. These projects have been highly publicized and have provided additional evidence that the ongoing development activity in the region is bolstering regional peace and security.

NEXT STEPS

The program is in closeout mode and in the process of resolving all administrative issues related to closing grants. No new program funds are being expended. Priorities for the next quarter include the following:

- Administering an independent final evaluation of the OTI program in northern Uganda (slated for April);
- Donating all program assets (computers, vehicles, phones, etc.) to appropriate USAID partners, local government offices, and other organizations working on recovery issues in northern Uganda;
- Closing field offices in Pader, Kitgum, Kampala and, eventually, Gulu; and
- Ending the program in May 2011.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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